

REMARKS

A two-month extension of time is hereby requested so that the period for response will expire on Monday, May 3, 2004.

Applicant herewith affirms the elections that are articulated in paragraph 9 on pages 3-4 of the Office Action and agrees with the identification of the claims that are generic to the elected species.

However, the Examiner is requested to withdraw his restriction/non-unity position and to formally act on all of the pending Claims, including newly added Claim 12. Firstly, any restriction consideration is improper since this application is a national phase filing of an earlier PCT application where only non-unity is a potential consideration. It is deemed that there is unity among all of the Claims since there is a common thread or single general inventive concept that permeates all. For example, Claim 6 is a product-by-process Claim that requires that any of the processes of Claims 1-5 be practiced in order to produce such as product. In all cases, a process is employed wherein a polymer/elastomer is cross-linked by means of the free radicals formed by the decomposition of a peroxide, wherein one or more copolymers comprising olefin-derived moieties as well as anhydride and/or acid groups are used in a certain quantity. Additionally, Claims 7-12 all are similarly linked by dependency upon the practice of the process of the general process that is articulated in Claim 1.

Claim 10 has been amended to overcome its improper multiple dependency and new Claim 12 has been added to cover the scope removed from Claim 10 by that amendatory action.

Claim 7 has been amended to place it in independent form and the basis for the percent carrier material has been specified as would be

understood by the person of ordinary skill in the art from the sentence on page 10, line 12 that states "up to a total of 100%".

Claim 8 is not deemed to be indefinite. For a theoretical product with "n = 30 only", it would hold that $M = M_n = M_w = M_z$. Only where there is a variation in n, would one indeed speak of average molecular weights. However, it is deemed that it is clear that in this case M simply means the ordinary molecular weight.

Claim 9 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

In regard to the art rejections that the Examiner has interposed, it is submitted that WO '512 does not disclose the compositions as presently claimed (irrespective of the molecular weight of the polymer that is used). More specifically, WO '512 only states that a peroxide can be used in conjunction with the adhesion-improving copolymers and in the Examples they are admixed separately to the polymer to be treated. Hence, the compositions "as such" are not disclosed or even suggested by this cited reference.

Furthermore, at page 2, lines 24-28, WO '512 teaches to use of "such small peroxide quantities...that they have no detrimental effects on the ultimate products". The Examiner is requested to note that the adhesion-improving copolymers of WO '512 are used in a thermoplastic composition and only serve to initiate a grafting process. This is in sharp contrast to the presently claimed compositions that comprise significant amounts of peroxides, since they have to initiate a cross-linking process.

Blecke discloses a process to make copolymers wherein the peroxides are used to initiate the copolymerization reaction. For example, Example 1 states that "When the polymerization reaction is judged to be complete, the excess olefin ... is separated. Clearly, the peroxide is employed just to initiate the polymerization, and the reaction is run until all the peroxide has decomposed. Hence, the

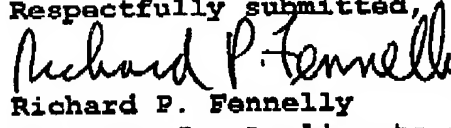
product of Blecke is not a composition, as presently claimed, since the compositions taught by Blecke do not contain 5-60% peroxide.

It is submitted that the present compositions are also not obvious over either WO '512 or Blecke, since there is no teaching or suggestion in either of these cited references that would lead the person of ordinary skill in the art to make compositions containing 5-60% peroxide. Furthermore, Blecke uses such compounds as dispersing agents. There is no indication in Blecke that the products can be used in a cross-linking process in combination with peroxides to avoid the blooming of the decomposition products of the peroxide.

An Abstract on a separate page is also enclosed, as requested, as the last page hereof. It is based on the Abstract from the PCT application.

In view of the amendments and remarks that are contained herein, allowance of the relevant pending claims is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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CROSS-LINKED PRODUCTS WITH NO BLOOMING AND REDUCED FOGGING**Abstract of the Disclosure**

The invention relates to the use of copolymers comprising olefin-derived as well as anhydride and/or acid moieties in the cross-linking of polymers/elastomers using free radicals obtained by decomposing a peroxide. The cross-linked products show essentially no blooming and reduced levels of volatile compounds when compared to products that are cross-linked in the absence of the copolymer.